

HISTORIC GREEN POINT

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SEMICENTENNIAL

1869—1919

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HISTORIC GREEN POINT

A Brief Account of the Beginning and Development of the Northerly Section of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York, locally known as Green Point

By
WILLIAM L. FELTER, Ph.D.
Principal of Girls' High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SEMICENTENNIAL OF
THE GREEN POINT SAVINGS BANK
AND BY THAT INSTITUTION

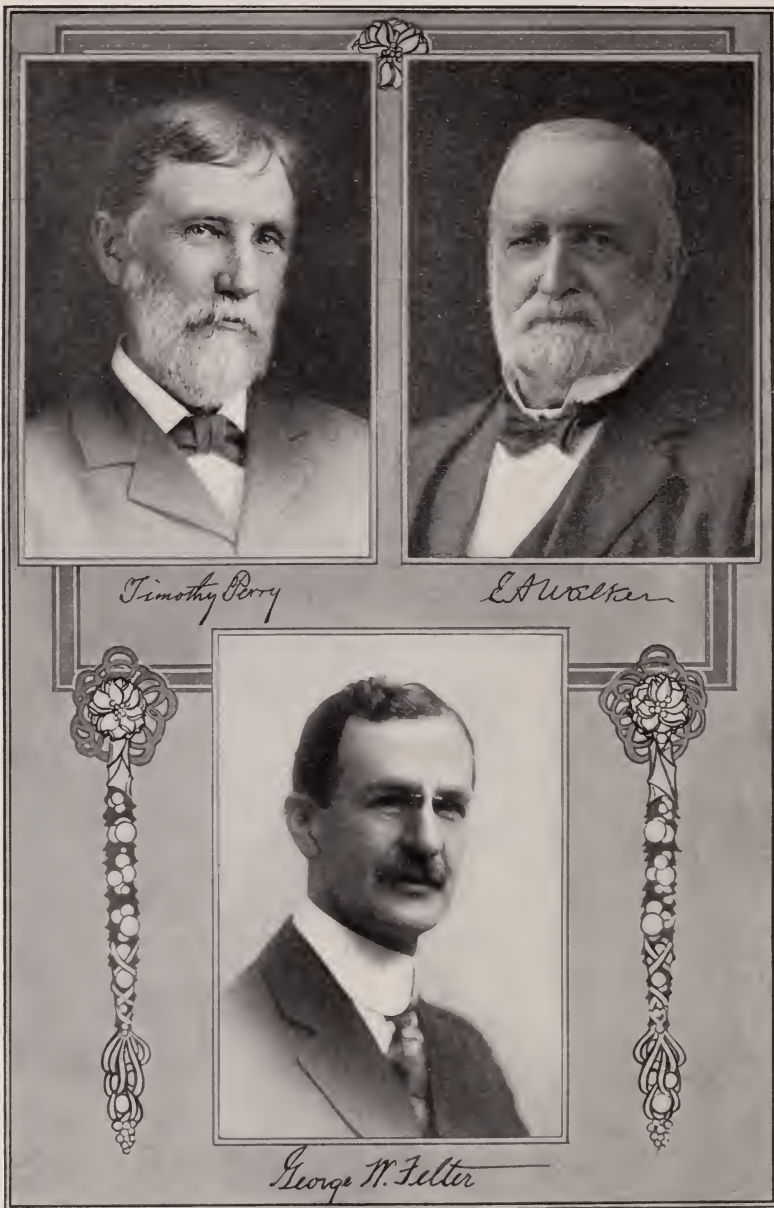
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*Timothy Perry**E. A. Walker**George W. Feltner*

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WILLIAM M. MESEROLE	January, 1869—	January, 1873
EDWARD F. WILLIAMS	January, 1873—	May, 1880
TIMOTHY PERRY	July, 1880—	January, 1909
EPHRAIM A. WALKER	January, 1909—	December, 1917
GEORGE W. FELTER	January, 1918—	

VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE GREEN POINT SAVINGS BANK

GEORGE S. BARTON	January, 1869—	January, 1877
NATHANIEL S. BAILEY	January, 1869—	January, 1874
FARREL LOGAN	January, 1874—	January, 1880
HENRY PRESTON	January, 1877—	March, 1878
WILLIAM FOULKS	January, 1879—	January, 1881
HARVEY E. TALMAGE	January, 1880—	January, 1896
EPHRAIM A. WALKER	January, 1881—	January, 1909
ADRIAN MESEROLE	January, 1897—	September, 1913
CHARLES H. REYNOLDS	January, 1909—	
DONALD A. MANSON	January, 1914—	

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LEWIS JURGENS	WILLIAM C. REID
JAMES A. McCAFFERTY	CHARLES H. REYNOLDS
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HERMAN COTTRELL
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HENRY EGGERS
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P. C. INGERSOLL
JAMES L. JENSEN
THOMAS D. JONES
CHRISTIAN H. KOCH
FARREL LOGAN
DANIEL MCCOLLUM

ADRIAN MESEROLE
ARCHIBALD K. MESEROLE
WILLIAM M. MESEROLE
ADAM METZ
JONATHAN MOORE
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WILLIAM H. PAINE
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ALBERT L. PERRY
TIMOTHY PERRY
HENRY PRESTON, SR.
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GEORGE H. STONE
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EPHRAIM A. WALKER
GEORGE W. WATTS
ROBERT J. WHITTEMORE
EDWARD F. WILLIAMS

RESIGNED TRUSTEES OF THE GREEN POINT
SAVINGS BANK

PETER BURDEN

THOMAS J. PRESTON, SR.
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STATEMENT
OCTOBER 1, 1918
GREEN POINT SAVINGS BANK

RESOURCES	Par Value	Market Value
Bonds and Mortgages...	\$ 6,486,575.	\$ 6,486,575.
U. S. Government Bonds	342,250.	
State Bonds.....	366,000.	
County Bonds.....	305,000.	
Bonds of Cities of this State	809,800.	
Bonds of Cities of other States.....	1,257,000.	
Town Bonds	45,000.	
Rail Road Bonds	1,594,000.	
Market Value of Bonds..		4,489,455.54
Bank Building.....	125,000.	125,000.
Other Real Estate.....	24,234.19	24,234.19
Interest due and accrued	184,200.69	184,200.69
Cash on hand and in Banks	803,032.84	803,032.84
Liberty Bond Subscrip- tions	40,000.	40,000.
	<u>\$ 12,382,092.72</u>	<u>\$ 12,152,498.26</u>
LIABILITIES		
Balance due Depositors.	\$ 10,946,355.12	\$ 10,946,355.12
Taxes Accrued.....	2,000.	2,000.
Guaranty Fund.....	1,433,737.60	1,204,143.14
	<u>\$ 12,382,092.72</u>	<u>\$ 12,152,498.26</u>

FOREWORD

THE Green Point Savings Bank takes great pleasure in presenting this succinct account of the history of this section of the city where its own continuous existence of half a century has been successfully spent. The history of a town, city, state, or nation is largely the history of its great men, and so no apology is necessary in listing the names of the early settlers, the pioneers of industry, and the leaders in social, educational, and church life. Scattered through the text are various illustrations that give a clear view of the personality of these founders and also of the fifty years of life of the Savings Bank. The Officials of the Bank hope that this record will be of general interest and that it may prove worth preservation because of its historic value.

Grateful acknowledgment of deep obligation is hereby made to Mr. Buel C. Haff for supplying to the author all the salient facts. His research work is worthy of all praise.

Credit is also due Mr. Andrew Jackson Provost and Mr. Walter M. Meserole for valuable assistance.

HISTORY OF GREEN POINT

EVERYBODY is interested in the beginning of things. We look at the majestic oak towering to the sky, its wide-spreading branches the home of the feathered songsters of the air, its grateful shade a boon to the weary traveler, and in imagination we go back to the tiny acorn from which the giant oak developed. The first words of the Bible are: "In the beginning." Rome, the city of the seven hills, traced its origin to the fabled Romulus and Remus suckled by a wolf. Berne, the capital of Switzerland, is said to have obtained its name from its reputed founder the Duke of Zaehringen, who determined to name the city he planned to build for the first animal he met and killed. Tradition asserts that he killed a bear. At all events the bear is to-day the national emblem of that land of mountains and lakes. So Green Point many years ago had its humble beginnings, although it can claim no Romulus nor Remus. It is our purpose to discover these beginnings and bring the story of growth and development down to the present day.

Green Point is a peninsula. On the north and east Newtown creek marks off its boundaries. On the south Bushwick creek separates it in part from Williamsburgh, and the East River is its western boundary. This geographical situation almost entirely isolated, gave it a peculiar opportunity for separate development and it is therefore not to be wondered at that the early settlers of Green Point were men of independence of character, self-dependent, and possessing those native traits that make for vigorous manhood.

To the early settlers, however, these bodies of water were known by other names. Newtown creek was spoken

of sometimes as Maspeth kill. In the early days, there were high banks stretching from the mouth of this creek as far as the present Manhattan avenue bridge. Following the line of this creek inland we would have found in early times a salt marsh extending to a point south of the present Blissville bridge. Here the banks rose in height and continued so as far as Penny bridge. This salt marsh was known as the "Back Meadows." They formed a large irregular triangle with the apex at about the present intersection of Driggs avenue and Humboldt street. Near this point was the head of a water course called Wyckoff's creek, running northerly near to the line of Green Point avenue and then easterly to Maspeth kill, its mouth being somewhat south of where stands the Blissville bridge.

On the north side of Green Point avenue these salt meadows were drained by Whale creek, which in its course followed the general line of Humboldt street. This creek as well as Wyckoff's creek had many small tributaries and devious courses.

Bushwick creek was in the early days known as Norman's kill. This creek, too, drained salt meadows. At high water the tide covered the meadows, forming a beautiful miniature bay, but the retreating waters revealed an expanse of green sedge and brown mud flats. Through these wandered the two deep channels of the kill as well as numerous little meandering tributaries.

A traveler in those times gazing at Green Point from a boat on the East River would have noticed many high sandy headlands, remnants of the early glacial period, similar to those still remaining along the north shore of Long Island. Near where the foot of Freeman street now lies, a point of land jutted abruptly beyond the shore line into the river for a considerable distance. This point, covered with river ooze and green grass, naturally attracted

the gaze of the sailors on passing vessels, who gave to this verdant projection the name of Green Point.

Originally Green Point meant only this projecting piece of land, but later the name was applied to the entire peninsula from Newtown creek to Bushwick creek with the enclosed meadows. It was not until 1854, when this section of the city with the rest of the town of Bushwick and then the young city of Williamsburgh were united with the older city of Brooklyn, that the elastic name of Green Point was again stretched to cover the whole of the present seventeenth ward.

It would appear from what precedes that the neck of high ground lying east of the Back Meadows and north of Meeker avenue, known for many years as Wyckoff farm and later as Kingsland farm, was not considered in the early days as a part of Green Point. This section now, however, forms a very important portion of the community with its pleasant homes, its large industrial establishments and beautiful but improperly named Winthrop park.

Reference has been made to the peninsular form of Green Point, almost surrounded by river, creeks, and marshes. Its only upland connection with Williamsburgh was measured by the length of Driggs avenue from Leonard street to Humboldt street. Along the present line of Driggs avenue ran an ancient highway, the west end of which was at a public landing place on Bushwick creek, near the corner of Guernsey street and Driggs avenue. This was called the Wood Point Landing. This road east led along the line of Driggs avenue to Humboldt street and from that point followed a winding course to Bushwick village. This road along Green Point's extreme southern border remained the sole public highway until 1838. There was, however, a farm lane with gates at each farm line, which the traveler was obliged to open

and close at each passage, giving communication to the Green Point farms from this Wood Point road which took its name from the landing. This farm lane started from the back end of the most northerly farms (Freeman street west of Manhattan avenue), ran across the hilly portions of the farms to about Green Point avenue and Oakland street, and then along the edge of the Back Meadows to its junction with the Wood Point road at Humboldt street.

Let us in imagination follow a traveler of the early days as he goes from Green Point to New York, an event for the traveler at once wearying and arduous. He would follow the farm lane and the Wood Point road to Bushwick village. From that point his journey took him to Bushwick Cross Roads (Bushwick and Flushing avenues), then along the south side of the Wallabout swamp to Flushing and Nostrand avenues, from thence he took his way over the hills by a crooked road to Bedford Corners (Bedford avenue and Fulton street). There he would come upon the road from Jamaica to the Brooklyn ferry. This road followed the lines of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues and Fulton street to the river shore. Every foot of the trip was made in deep sand or loose cobbles. It was a long, wearisome ride on those washed-out and stony roads, over many miles in the springless wagons of that day.

The earliest authentic record in the history of Green Point dates from the purchase of the land from the Indians by the Dutch West India Company in 1638. The ancient town records of Bushwick reveal the founding of the Township of Bushwick by Governor Stuyvesant in 1660, four years before New Amsterdam passed under the control of the English and became New York. It will be recalled that he was the last of the Dutch governors of New Amsterdam, he of the wooden leg and peppery temper. It appears that the governor received a petition reciting

the fact that "Fourteen Frenchmen with a Dutchman Pieter Janse Wit, their interpreter, have arrived here." Acting favorably upon this petition the Dutch governor founded the Township of Bushwick. The establishment of this township marks the beginning of social and political life for this section.

The interpreter, Pieter Janse Wit, located his farm upon the neck of high ground, lying north of Meeker avenue between the Back Meadows and Maspeth kill, and this tract later became one of the most desirable portions of Green Point. It is evident that Pieter Janse Wit had qualities of leadership and was a man of parts, for he became the first magistrate of the town and for many years headed the list of names in the records. In 1720 this land was purchased by Peter Lott, and twenty-nine years later was sold by his son of the same name to Abraham Polhemus of the Brooklyn family of that name. In 1799 it was conveyed to Peter Wyckoff of Bushwick, and in 1847 the larger portion was bought by David and Ambrose G. Kingsland, who held it until it was laid out into lots and sold for building purposes in the eighties. It is in the memory of persons still living that this transformation took place, of a truck farm to its present crowded homes and streets.

It was only a few years after the purchase from the Indians that a number of so-called Norman families, who were really Scandinavians, settled here. One of these families, headed by Dirck Volckertsen, better known as "Dirck the Norman," came into possession of the whole of Green Point. He was one of a small group of adventurous Scandinavians who early came to New Amsterdam and engaged successfully in the business enterprises of that period. Those were the days of smuggling, of rum drinking, of hardy sailors free in the use of their dirks, of gambling, of risk and adventure. The court records in

the case of Jan de Pree vs. Dirck the Norman, bring to light an amusing and instructive page of the life of that day. Dirck must have thrived on litigation, for his name often appears as complainant or defendant on the court minutes.

The patent granting the ownership of Green Point to Dirck the Norman was dated April 3, 1645. He built the first house presumably the following year. It rested upon a knoll, about where Calyer street is laid out, and from one to two hundred feet west of the present line of Franklin street, only a few feet from the exact location where more than two hundred years later the Green Point Savings Bank began its successful career. The site of the home was evidently chosen with care. The lawn sloped gently in front to Norman's kill on the south, and gradually to the East River on the west. The house was of stone, one and a half stories in height, with dormer windows, built in quaint Dutch style with old Dutch doors, studded with glass eyes, and brass knockers. Eventually, the farm, orchard, and meadows became among the best of those of early days. It was Dirck the Norman who gave the name to Norman's kill, a name that disappeared as applied to a body of water but reappeared in the name of Norman avenue.

By trade Dirck the Norman was a ship carpenter, an occupation that for many years kept busy many men in Green Point. Originally Green Point was an agricultural community, but two centuries after the time of Dirck, ship building became its chief industry. Many of the old boys still living recall with pleasant memories the many launchings of vessels from the shore of Green Point into the East River. For half a century this industry held sway to be deposed later by other industrial activities. Dirck, however, did not follow his trade but devoted himself to agriculture with marked success. At his death

his sons inherited these lands and sold them in 1718. The family then scattered, some going to Brooklyn, others to New Jersey, but wherever they went they became men of affairs and influence.

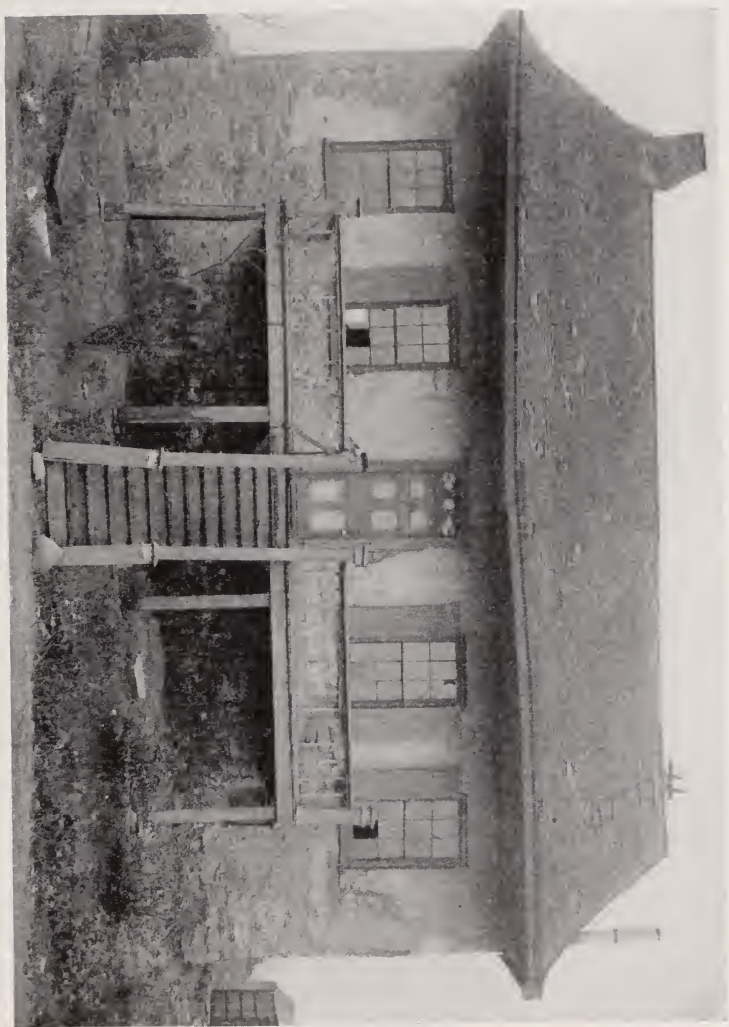
The only house still remaining as a relic of the first settlers in Green Point may be found at Meeker avenue adjoining Newtown creek. Some modern touches have been added to it during the almost two and one-half centuries it has stood, but it is still a good example of one type of the Dutch farmhouse of the time of Pieter Praa. It was built by Joost Durie (George Duryea), a Huguenot who came from Holland to America and settled in New Utrecht. Later, about 1681, he removed to the disputed land between Bushwick and Newtown and erected this house. Here the Duryea family lived for over a century. The house then passed into the hands of Josiah Blackwell, for whom Blackwell's Island is named, and finally became the possession of William Bleser, in whose estate it still remains. When this house was built the Dutch living outside the stockade were obliged to fortify their homes, because the Indians were decidedly hostile as a result of the crimes against them by William Keith, the Dutch Governor. Beneath the porch in the wall may be seen two gun holes to be used in defending the house against Indian attacks.

An investigation of the early records brings to light a shrewd and wealthy business woman, Christina Cappaens. She was a prominent figure in New Amsterdam, and at the time of her death lived on what is now known as Stone street in New York City. Although she was never possessed of a home of her own in Green Point, she was in many respects a very important link in the development of this community, as will shortly appear. The name as given above was her maiden name, and like all women of that time she was known by her maiden name together with the added title of "wife (or widow) of Jacob Hay,"

and later "wife (or widow) of David Jochensen." She seems to have been very successful in her marriages.

In 1653 Jacob Hay purchased from Dirck the Norman the Northern part of Green Point, the line of division running from the river at the north end of Franklin street, to the northeast corner of St. Anthony's church and thence east to the meadows at Oakland street. The land so purchased was inherited in 1693 by the only child of Christina Cappaens, Maria Hay, who had in 1684 married for her second husband Pieter Praa, the third and greatest personality in the settlement of Green Point. Captain Pieter Praa was a man of great prominence in the history of the Town of Bushwick. He easily ranks as the greatest man from its earliest days to the time of its merger with the City of Brooklyn two centuries later. Captain Praa was of Huguenot extraction and was born in Leyden, Holland, 1655. His parents were from Dieppe in France on the English Channel. Like other Huguenots they were expelled from their native land owing to religious persecution. It was during their temporary stay in Holland, a refuge to the oppressed of all nations, that Pieter was born. When he was five years old his parents emigrated to the new world and settled first in Newtown and then in Bushwick near the intersection of Flushing avenue and Broadway.

After his marriage to Maria Hay, Captain Praa and his wife lived in a stone house on their Green Point farm, which was located on the meadow's edge at Freeman street just east of Oakland street. This house was destroyed by fire in 1832. His history is another evidence of the loss to France that came as a result of the expulsion of the Huguenots. Pieter Praa was not only captain of militia but was magistrate as well. He was influential in both local and provincial politics. He was a magnificent horseman and a genuine sportsman. He was easily the leader in public affairs of the community. He added



THE OLDEST HOUSE

largely to his original land possessions and purchased from the sons of Dirck the Norman all their remaining Green Point land. In 1687 he bought from Anneke Jan Bogardus of New Amsterdam, a tract of about 130 acres of land at the mouth of Maspeth kill. This tract, known as Dominie's Hoek, later as Hunter's Point and Long Island City, consisted of two or three low hillocks rising out of a sea of encompassing marshes valuable for their salt hay for cattle. In addition to the above Captain Praa owned some 40,000 acres of land in New Jersey.

Captain Praa's death occurred in 1740. He left no son to perpetuate his name, but he had numerous progeny through his four daughters, many of whom have played prominent parts in business and politics in Green Point and in larger spheres of action. These four daughters were Elizabeth, who married Jan Meserole; Maria, who married Wynant Van Zandt; Christina, who married David Provoost; Annetti, who married William Bennett. At the time of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) there were but five families on Green Point, all of them lineal descendants of Pieter Praa. The heads of these families were as follows:

1. Abraham Meserole (son of Jan Meserole) and grandson of Pieter Praa, who lived on the banks of the East River, between what are now India and Java streets. Later the house in which he lived was occupied by Nezhiah Bliss, whose wife was a granddaughter of the above named Abraham Meserole. This house was demolished about 1875. It was at this period that nearly all the old relics gave place to the necessities of modern industrial developments.

2. Jacob Meserole (another son of Jan Meserole), who resided in the southerly part of Green Point, near Bushwick creek meadows (between the present Manhattan avenue and Lorimer street near Norman avenue) not far



CAPTAIN PIETER PRAA

from the residence, still standing, of his grandson, the late Adrian Meserole. His farm included the entire southerly portion of Green Point.

3. Jacob Bennett (son of William Bennett, whose wife Annetti was a daughter of Pieter Praa), who dwelt in a house in the northerly portion of Green Point, near the present Clay street, midway between Franklin street and Manhattan avenue. His farm was later known as the "Griffin Farm" and for many years was owned by the trustees of Union College.

4. Jonathan Provoost (son of David Provoost, whose wife Christina was a daughter of Pieter Praa), who lived on the east side of Green Point in a stone house on the edge of the meadows, formerly the residence of Pieter Praa. Later this house was occupied by the late James W. Valentine, whose wife was a great-granddaughter of the above named Jonathan Provoost. The old Provoost burying ground near the northeast corner of India and Oakland streets was removed about 1875 and no trace of it remains.

5. Jacobus Calyer (whose wife Janitie was a daughter of Jan Meserole and granddaughter of Pieter Praa), who occupied the house referred to and described in previous pages, near the mouth of Bushwick creek and built by Dirck the Norman.

These five families at the time of the Revolutionary War constituting the entire population of Green Point, must have lived quiet lives, cultivating the fertile fields which had descended to them from their ancestors. Each farmer had his own large boat which he used in carrying his surplus farm products to the New York market. This does not mean that the East River was crossed in a straight line. It was necessary to drop down the river at least as far as the present Brooklyn bridge, for New York in those days did not extend north of the City Hall.

The homes of that period were all after the Dutch style, one and a half stories in height, the lower portion of stone, and the upper usually of wood, with dormer windows and wide overhang. A broad hall running through the middle of the main floor was lighted in the day time either by the bull's eye glass insets in the upper part of each door, resembling little port holes, or by opening the upper portion of the door. Knockers of brass or iron hung on the outside of the door to announce the arrival of a caller, and a great flat stone helped the guest to step over the sill. It is easy to believe that stone step, sill, door, and knocker were kept in immaculate condition by these Dutch descendants, who prized personal and household cleanliness and almost elevated them to the position of sacred rites. It requires no stretch of the imagination to know that these Green Pointers had a rich and varied larder. Their orchards gave a profusion of luscious fruits. The fields yielded in abundance all the then known vegetables and cereals, and the adjoining creeks teemed with pan fish and blue crabs, a condition that existed until the advent of the oil refining factories. Their refuse drained into the creeks killed all fish life.

In these early days the houses were heated by great wide open fire places in the living room. This was the place where the food was prepared and eaten and where the family in the evening gathered about the fire place, warmed themselves at the great log fire, and discussed family, social, and political affairs. The casual caller was entertained at this hospitable fire place. Wood was the only fuel and every farm had its wood lot. For the fire a huge back log was rolled into place, then smaller logs about six feet in length would be piled in front and on top of the back log. A roaring fire could easily be kept going to make the entire house comfortably warm except in bitter winter weather.

Each house had its outdoor oven in which the busy housewife could easily bake a dozen loaves of bread or as many pies at a time. The vigorous outdoor life was conducive to healthy appetites, but these Dutch families were all good providers. Large families were also the rule.

This sparsely settled section gave small opportunity for social life. The farms were large and widely separated and the church and store a great distance away. The gallants who sued for the favor of the several daughters of Pieter Praa and Maria Hay must have been rowed up and across the East River by their slaves in order to do their courting. All these daughters married merchants or professional men from across the river.

Prior to 1824 nearly all Dutch families were slave holders. Pieter Praa was the owner of quite a number and in his will he provided that each slave should choose among which of the children he desired to serve. To his body servant, Jack, was given by terms of the will an island, a part of which is now Long Island City and which was known for more than a century later as "Jack's Island." Although not a large island it was sufficiently large for his maintenance. The Dutch enjoyed a reputation of treating their slaves with consideration. Although the act of 1824 freed all slaves in New York State, these black servants continued to regard themselves as members of the household to which they had formerly belonged. Many of these slaves had been brought up to a trade and there was work in abundance for all.

It is a matter of general history that during the greater part of the Revolutionary War this portion of Long Island was in the possession of the British, and loyalty, real or assumed, to the King of England seemed the only path of safety for the Green Point families to follow. It appears, however, that Abraham Meserole's son, John, cared less about safety than did his neighbors, for he came under

suspicion as a rebel and was at one time taken prisoner and confined in a New York jail. Tradition reports that all the families suffered severely from the depredations of the British soldiers and their camp followers.

After the close of the Revolutionary War and for more than a third of the succeeding century, Green Point maintained its seclusiveness. The dwellers upon the well-ordered farms had little intercourse with the outside world. Row boats or sail boats would, when necessary, convey them across the river. On Sundays, on horseback or in wagons, they might be seen taking their way across the neck to the Bushwick church. Its well established character as a secluded nook, geographically remote and not easily accessible, remained until about 1840. In fact the history of the place up to this date is largely the family chronicles of the Meseroles, Calyers, Provoosts and Bennetts, the married names of the daughters of Pieter Praa, Green Point's most distinguished early citizen.

We have traced thus far the first two centuries of the history of Green Point, an agricultural period, from 1638, when the Dutch West India Company purchased from the Indians the tract of land that later became the Town of Bushwick (all of Brooklyn lying north of Broadway and Division avenue), to 1838. It was the opening of the first public highway in 1838 that made possible the development of Green Point into a small town. This highway ran across the land along the line of the present Franklin street, with bridges over Newtown and Bushwick creeks, and became a part of the turnpike running from Williamsburgh to Astoria. Green Point thus lost its position of splendid isolation and became connected on either side with the greater world beyond its borders. During these two centuries there was no church, no school, no store. The early families resorted for religious, educational, and political affairs to Bushwick village (Metro-

politan and Bushwick avenues), which was the municipal center of the Town of Bushwick, of which Green Point was politically a part.

The time had now come when the land that had been turned by a plow was to be used as sites for homes and factories. The high sandy bluffs facing the river were gradually to be leveled. The rolling country behind the bluffs, which had been brought up to a high state of cultivation by skilled farmers, was to be intersected by streets. The fine orchards and scattered fruit trees along the fences between the fields were to be obliterated and linger in the memory only as the name of the southeasterly part of Green Point. The era of the industrial development had dawned.

Reference has been made in a previous paragraph to the ship-building industry as one of the most potent factors in the development of Green Point. While ship building began in the colonies in 1607, the new industry appeared here about 1840. The place was well adapted for this new departure, for the beaches on the East River front were of fine white sand. The expanding world commerce following the overthrow of the Napoleonic power and the expansion of American commerce created a demand for strong, swift, and easily handled ocean carriers. This demand was met in the creation of the historic American clipper ship, long reputed the best and fastest in the world. Although some yards launched as many as three ships at a time, it was impossible to create a sufficient supply. The Yankee crew on board these beautiful vessels with graceful lines did much to gain for these ships an enviable reputation. As every man on board from the captain to the cabin boy was a shareholder, it was easy to develop and maintain a fine esprit du corps.

The appearance of the East River beaches must have been extremely interesting, not to say fascinating. On

the ways were vessels in various stages of completion in charge of great gangs of shipwrights. Mammoth piles of lumber lay about waiting for use; white oak, hackmatack and locust for ribs, yellow pine for keelsons and ceiling timbers, white pine for floors, and live oak for aprons. Through the air was wafted the odor of damp pine chips, of pitch and of oakum, while the ceaseless clatter of mallets and busy saws gave evidence of strenuous industry. The workers came in large numbers, attracted by the permanent character of the work, bringing their families and taking up their residence here. The farm stage soon passed into the village stage of development, then into town, until on January 1, 1855, Green Point was consolidated with Bushwick and the young city of Williamsburgh with the older city of Brooklyn. At that time there were in the Seventeenth ward about 15,000 of population, but this figure was increased to about 30,000 in 1875, when ship-building had passed its zenith of growth.

The hard labor exacted of these makers of ships is worth noting. The daily grind was fatiguing and exhausting in the extreme. Originally the day's work consisted of fifteen hours at the rate of \$1.25 per day. Later through labor organizations a ten-hour day was secured and the wages were increased by gradual steps until \$2.00 per day was the rate. Many of the men went from the yards to their homes only to eat and, exhausted by their day's labor, to retire. The long, hard day, the exposure to the burning heat in summer and the biting cold in winter, drained the vitality of the workers and left scant opportunity for leisure or wholesome recreation. The equipment of the yards was primitive. The sawing was done by hand, one laborer being in the pit with face covered by a veil to protect him from the sawdust, and one above working with a two-man saw. There were no cranes, cables, or power helps such as are seen in the modern yard, only

man-power to raise the heaviest timbers by hand. The following apprentice's indenture throws a flood of light upon the working conditions of that day. John Englis later became one of the great ship builders of Green Point.

THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH, That John Englis, now aged sixteen years, nine months and twenty-four days, by and with the consent of George Bell, his step-father, hath put himself, and by these Presents doth voluntarily and of his own free will and accord put himself, apprentice to Stephen Smith, of the City of New York, ship carpenter, to learn the art, trade and mystery of a ship carpenter, and after the manner of an apprentice to serve from the day of the date herefor, for and during and until the full end and term of four years two months and seven days next ensuing: during all which time the said apprentice his master faithfully shall serve, his secrets keep, his lawful commands everywhere readily obey; he shall do no damage to his said master, nor see it done by others without telling or giving notice thereof to his said master: he shall not waste his said master's goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any: he shall not contract matrimony within the said term: at cards, dice or any unlawful game he shall not play, whereby his said master may have damage with his own goods, nor with the goods of others, without license from his said master, he shall neither buy nor sell: he shall not absent himself day or night from his master's service without his leave; not haunt ale-houses, taverns, dance-houses, or play-houses; but in all things behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do during said term. And the said master shall use the utmost of his endeavors to teach, or cause to be taught or instructed, the said apprentice in the trade or mystery of a ship-carpenter, and the said master shall pay to the said apprentice, the sum of Two dollars and



AMERICAN CLIPPER SHIPS

fifty cents weekly, for each and every week he shall faithfully serve him during the said term. And also shall pay him, the said apprentice, the sum of Forty dollars per year, payable quarterly for each and every of the said years, which is in lieu of the meat, drink, washing, lodging, clothing and all other necessities. And for the true performance of all and singular the covenants and agreements aforesaid, the said parties bind themselves each unto the other firmly by these Presents.

In Witness thereof the parties to the Presents have here unto set their hands and seals the 10th day of September, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and twenty-five.

Stephen Smith
John Englis
George Bell

The vital importance of the work of building ships to the growth of the place is seen in the statement that for thirty years (1840-1870), 35% of the population were engaged in this industry. Among the many master builders who at various times had their yards here were: Edwin Childs, William Boggs, William W. Colyer, Jonathan Easom, E. S. Whitlock, Thomas A. Seabury, Robert H. Snyder, Henry Steers, Lupton and Co., Laurence and Foulks, whose yard was at the foot of West street; Webb and Bell, whose yard was located at Washington (West) and Green streets; Sneed and Co., later Sneed and Rowland, and finally The Continental Iron Works, at West and Calyer streets; Jeremiah Simonson, John Englis and Son, and lastly "honest old Jabez Williams," who transferred his yard about 1866 from the foot of Montgomery street, New York, to Green Point. He was later succeeded by his son Edward F. Williams, who after the organization of the Green Point Savings Bank, became its second president.

By 1870 only a few of the old establishments remained. Webb and Bell and John Englis and Son were about the only ones having any construction work on the ways in that year. George Bell and Eckford Webb, who in their day built many ships, clippers, and steamers for the ocean, as well as harbor and river craft, constructed the caissons for the foundations of the Brooklyn Bridge. The Continental Iron Works, however, has remained continuously in business with a wonderful record for construction. The Englis yards also hold an enviable record, for in their long career from 1838 to 1911, they had built or completed the joiner work on one hundred and thirteen steamships or steamboats, including "The Grand Republic," "Adirondack," "C. W. Morse," "Hendrick Hudson," "Trojan," "Princeton," "Rensselaer," "Clermont," and "Storm King." The decay of the industry was caused by increased costs of lumber and copper, labor troubles, the steamboat law of 1852, and last but by no means the least cause, the building of iron vessels.

There is one historic event in connection with the chronicles of Green Point which must not be overlooked, the building of Captain John Ericsson's "Monitor," an event that revolutionized naval warfare. Captain Ericsson born in Sweden in 1803, a deep student of mechanics, had already won enduring fame as the builder of the "Princeton," wherein he demonstrated the use of the propeller. When he had pleaded in vain with the Washington authorities for the adoption of his "Monitor" plan, two distinguished iron masters of Troy, Hon. John F. Winslow and his partner, Hon. John A. Griswold, came to the rescue. At their own financial risk they undertook the construction of this naval experiment. The attitude of the Washington experts concerning the proposed new fighting craft is seen in the statement of one of them who observed:

"It resembles nothing in the heavens above, or the

earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. You can take it home and worship it without violating any commandment." Despite such rebuffs the "Monitor" was finally constructed and boomed the death knell of wooden men-of-war.

It was President Lincoln himself who saved the day by the judicious exercise of his great powers of persuasion. From the interview when he intervened, came the government contract for the building of the "Monitor." The cost was not to exceed \$275,000 and the time limit was 101 days. The builders were obliged to guarantee the success of the experiment. Winslow and Griswold lacked the facilities at Troy, so the hull was built by Thomas F. Rowland and launched January 30, 1862, in exactly 101 days from the date of the contract. The later history of the "Monitor" is the history of the United States and of naval warfare, for the "cheese box on a raft" on the morning of March 9, 1862, vanquished the "conquering Merrimac," destroyed her and preserved the Union navy from destruction. The life of the "Monitor" was as brief as it was adventurous, for she foundered off cape Hatteras on the night of December 20, 1862.

The coming of the ship building industry brought to an end the exclusive character of the place and the sole inhabitancy of the five families of French Huguenot extraction, the descendants of Pieter Praa. Their day with its Dutch houses and wide-spreading farms, of bountiful orchards, and leafy woods, of Negro slaves, and rustic existence was gone beyond recall. The new era brought with it many native born Americans as well as a liberal sprinkling of English, Irish, Scotch, and Scandinavian emigrants. Houses were rapidly built to accommodate these newcomers and new streets were laid out. There was a considerable movement of population from the East side of New York as the advantages of living on this

side of the river became known. House builders recognizing their opportunity built for anticipated profits and on speculation, one of the earliest being Mr. John Hillyer, a mason by occupation. Practically all of the houses were frame dwellings. Land was cheap then. One colored inhabitant purchased sixteen lots at fifty dollars each and built him a house. This improvement he sold in 1842 for \$2,300, and the house became Poppy Smith's tavern, an inn run by John Smith on Franklin street near Green, well known to the earlier inhabitants.

Communities may be measured by various standards; by production, by consumption, by the conservation of capital. Just as a man is doomed to ultimate failure who habitually spends each week or year his entire income for that time, so a community which fails to make provision for the inevitable rainy day becomes sooner or later a group of impoverished men and women. It is evident that Green Point has its fair share of thrifty and prudent souls. Their philosophy of life is sound at heart, and the history of the Green Point Savings Bank becomes in a large measure the history of the people of the place so far as earning and saving capacities are concerned. The inception and development of this great institution make most interesting reading.

The development and growth of the community at this time, 1868, had reached a point where it was felt that there was a real need for a Savings Bank. A number of the prominent citizens perfected an organization and made application to the State Legislature for a charter for an institution to be known as the Green Point Savings Bank.

On January 11, 1869, the Bank opened its doors for business. The good judgment of the incorporators was proven during the first year of the Bank's existence when deposits aggregating \$135,000 were accumulated. The

original banking rooms of the institution were in a small two-story frame building on the northeast corner of Franklin and Oak streets.

Mention must be made at this point of the leading citizen of the village, Nezhiah Bliss, who married Mary A., the daughter of John A. Meserole. Mr. Bliss was born at Hebron, Connecticut, in 1790, and was therefore of Yankee origin. Circumstances compelled him in early life to be self-supporting, but this compulsion developed initiative and willingness to meet difficulties and assume responsibility. He was largely a self-educated man. It was about 1810 when he left his Connecticut home and came to New York City. Here he became intimate with Robert Fulton, who was at that time through his energy and financial resources rapidly making steam navigation a possibility. Mr. Bliss made it a practice wherever he went to seek the acquaintance of men of affairs, the really great men who have visions, and later through energy and resourcefulness realize their dreams. From Fulton he caught an enthusiasm for steam navigation, an enthusiasm which led to numerous experiments in the use of steam, and which culminated in the manufacture of steam engines and steamboats of approved model.

In 1811 with Daniel French he organized a company in Philadelphia and built a steamboat. In 1816 he was in Cincinnati, and becoming acquainted with the son of General (afterwards President) William Henry Harrison, and with the Harrison backing, he again experimented in steamboats and built one which for many years after sailed the Mississippi. After further traveling, adventure, and investigation into the vast natural resources of the West, particularly iron, he returned to New York in 1827, rich in knowledge and experience. It was about this time that he capitalized his knowledge of iron by establishing the Novelty Iron Works at the foot of East 12th street,



THE BANK AT FRANKLIN AND OAK STREETS

New York City. This concern speedily became famous for its marine engines, and most of the steam vessels built in Green Point had the Novelty engine installed.

In conjunction with the then famous president of Union College, Dr. Eliphalet Nott, he purchased thirty acres of the John Meserole farm in 1832, and the following year they purchased what was known as the Griffin farm. After these purchases and his marriage to Miss Meserole, his individual enterprise became largely the history of Green Point, and he became known as Neziah Bliss of Green Point.

In 1834 the whole of the place was surveyed at his expense, and laid out in streets and lots, the lines running so as properly to connect with the adjoining communities of Williamsburgh, Bushwick and Hunter's Point. In 1838, largely at his own expense, he built a foot bridge across Bushwick creek to the city of Williamsburgh. In 1839 the Ravenswood, Green Point, and Hallett's Cove Turnpike, which he had promoted, was opened for traffic, and followed the line of the present Franklin street.

The next civic problem that came to his fertile mind was proper ferry accommodations across the river. As late as 1850 all crossings had been by means of skiffs. For about ten years prior to this date one or more skiffs, manned usually by their owners, maintained a service from the foot of East 10th street, landing at Green Point wherever it best suited the ferryman or wherever the passenger desired. There was no uniform rate of ferriage. The price depended on the weather, the generosity of the passenger, or the greed of the skipper. As a rule, however, the rate ran from 10 cents to 25 cents. About 1850 Mr. Bliss obtained from the City of New York a workable lease, and two years later the ferry began operations, first from the foot of East 10th street and then of East 23rd street to the foot of Green Point avenue. This prop-



NEZIAH BLISS OF GREEN POINT

erty was soon disposed of, being purchased by Sheppard Knapp, whose family retain the franchise to this day.

Stages were the first public conveyances, a line running from the Williamsburgh ferries (foot of Grand street), through Franklin street to Poppy Smith's tavern near Green street. The proprietor and driver of this only stage was an Englishman named New. He began operations about 1850, the fare at first being 25 cents; but later a lower fare was charged. When the City Railroad Company in 1855 ran its cars through Williamsburgh to the approach to the bridge which Mr. Bliss had erected over Bushwick creek, he succeeded in inducing the company by patient coaxing to extend the tracks over the bridge and along Franklin street. He thus secured for the place a rapid communication with all parts of Brooklyn. Incidentally Mr. New's stage line was put out of business.

The continued growth of the community made docking facilities necessary, so David Provost, a descendant of Pieter Praa, built the first private dock in 1845, on his own property at the foot of Freeman street. With this valuable dock he started the first yard for the sale of building material, and this business was continued for many years after by his son John C. Provost. The federal government had built a dock on the shore about where Milton street reaches the river, and a house on it to store green powder. This dock was constructed by the government long before there were any buildings in Green Point except the farm houses. It was under a high bluff which extended from Java street to the south and ranged in height from a few feet to over one hundred. Part of this hill was owned by Archibald K. Meserole, who made quite a snug fortune by selling the sand from it to New York builders. The remainder of the hill was utilized in filling in low places and extending certain parts of the shore into the river. The powder house was abandoned by the government

prior to 1850, but the old building and the dock remained for many years after, a place dear to the hearts and glorious memories of the men of to-day, who as boys learned to swim and dive from this pier. Pottery beach was also a favorite swimming place.

Early in 1850 David Swalm opened a general store on the west side of Franklin street near Green. This store performed a very important function in the community of that day, for besides its regular business it supplied much of the social life of the neighborhood, and was also a center of political and literary interest. At about the same time Lucien Brown, who married Magdalen, the daughter of Nezhiah Bliss, started a hardware store at the corner of Franklin street and Green Point avenue. The pioneer physician and druggist was Dr. Isaac K. Snell, whose store was on Franklin street near Java street. He settled here in 1847, and was soon followed by other medical men, among whom were Dr. Job Davis and Dr. William Peer. The original lawyers of the little village were Andrew J. Provost, the son of David Provost, and the brothers Perry, Chauncey and Timothy. These men were all leaders in the early political and educational advancement of the town and county. Dr. William Starr was the first of the profession of dentistry who practiced in the place. His daughter married Mr. George W. Payntar of the Corn Exchange Bank.

But Green Point has other jewels in her queenly crown which she can proudly display, as two of America's foremost artists, George Innis and Albert Ralph Blakelock, had their homes here at one time. Innis was born in Newark, New Jersey, the son of a well-to-do father, a descendant of a long line of business people. While his genius was not confronted with the deprivations which poverty entails, he had his problems to face nevertheless. His father was a man of a decidedly practical turn of mind, shrewd and,

from the business point of view, very successful. George's task was to convince his father that artists are really useful members of the community, not to be classed with the mentally wayward or the worthless. When Innis came to Green Point following his return from his first trip to Europe, Green Point was a quiet spot for his growing family, convenient to his studio across the river. It was while he was residing here, working under great financial difficulties, that he produced some of his most important works, paintings which have since sold for thousands of dollars and which he would have been glad at that time to sell for as many hundreds.

Blakelock's connection with Green Point is much more intimate. Although born in Greenwich street, New York City, in 1847, the son of a physician, he married his wife here, Miss Cora Bailey, a daughter of George Bailey, who resided on Milton street for many years. In her youth Mrs. Blakelock was a strikingly handsome woman of the light blonde type, while her husband was tall, dark, and also handsome. A large family of children blessed their union. Little can be said of Blakelock's early years and education. An early love for painting and a passionate love of music soon revealed themselves. He mastered his profession without the aid of instructors. He went directly to nature in order to wrest from her by laborious methods her well-kept secrets. During all his life he was pressed for money, but he had a faithful and loyal supporter in his wife, who in her last great trial of devotion, had to dispose of every picture and study to keep the wolf from the door. The dark shadow of mental trouble hung over him like a pall of despair and the recognition of his unquestioned genius came too late to avert the catastrophe. He asked the world for bread but received only a stone. Society has not yet learned how to conserve her remarkable geniuses.

We turn now to a brighter picture—that of education. The pioneer was Mrs. Masquerier, who collected some twenty or thirty children into her home and taught them. Her unaided efforts were soon re-inforced and later supplanted by the public school system. When Martin Kalbfleisch moved to Green Point from Connecticut in 1842, he had a large family of children, and the existing school facilities did not meet his approval. He immediately attacked the school problem, with all the energy and resourcefulness at his command, and saw his efforts crowned with joy and reward in the erection of a school house on Manhattan avenue, between Java and Kent streets. The first principal of this school was Benjamin R. Davis, who ministered with marked success to the educational needs of Green Point for the princely (?) salary of \$500 per year, upon which he was compelled to support a large family. This school was the forerunner of P. S. No. 22. The movement thus auspiciously inaugurated by Mr. Kalbfleisch was consistently followed up, and in a few years four excellently equipped school buildings furnished educational opportunities for the oncoming generation. These schools and their successors to-day are among the best of the city.

Considering next the political life of this section, we note that the local political body in the early days was the Town Board of Supervisors. The office of the supervisor was an ancient and important one in the history of the colonies. Before the establishment of the federal government the supervisor was appointed to office by the Governor-General of the Province of New York. With the setting up of the independent government the method of selection was changed, the supervisor being elected in each town by viva voce vote, until the act of February 13, 1787, when the method of voting by ballot was introduced. The functions of the supervisors of Kings County corres-

ponded quite closely to those of the present Board of Aldermen. The first meeting of the Board of Supervisors after the incorporation of the old city of Brooklyn was held at the Apprentices' Library, May 27, 1834.

Up to this time and for a long period John Conselyea of Bushwick town, of which Green Point was a part, had represented the neighborhood on the Board, but he was succeeded by Nicholas Wyckoff, and in turn by the following: Abraham D. Soper, Martin R. Meeker, James De Bevoise, Charles J. De Bevoise and Martin Kalbfleisch. The last named was elected as a democrat in 1851. He always engaged actively in politics and remained supervisor until after consolidation. As one of the commissioners he aided in drafting the charter for the consolidated cities of Williamsburgh and Brooklyn with their outlying towns, including Bushwick. He served three years as President of the Board of Aldermen and in 1861 was elected Mayor of the city.

After Green Point became the 17th ward of the consolidated city, the first supervisor was H. Bartlett Fenton, who was succeeded by the following: George W. Kelsey, John A. Boutelle, Thomas C. Dieks, John T. Williams, the son of Jabez Williams and brother of Edward F. Williams, the second president of the Green Point Savings Bank; Jonathan Moore, Stephen Clark, Joseph Droll, Thomas Devyr, Herman Cottrell, Henry Kiefer, John A. Connolly. Clark held office longer than any other supervisor, about eight years, but not continuously.

Practically all the social and literary activities of the people were centered about the churches, although later the Sewanhaka Club became an organization for the promotion of social affairs. Before any of the religious denominations began their distinctive organizations, a Sunday school was organized and met in the basement of the home of Mr. Clark Tiebout on Franklin street. The beginnings

were most humble. Mr. William Vernon was the first superintendent. The school, however, soon outgrew its first home, and in 1846 was moved to the loft over David Swalm's general store.

The first church organization began as a Methodist mission shortly before 1847, in a small one-story building on the east side of Franklin street near Huron. From this sprang the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Green Point on Union (Manhattan) avenue, between India and Java streets, organized in the winter of 1847-8 by the Rev. Sylvester H. Clark of the New York East Conference. The society had been projected by Benjamin Downing and Charles Huff, who had hired the office of Hopkins' livery stable, where the early meetings were held. The organization of the church was quickly followed by the purchase of the site and the erection of a frame building. In 1864, during the pastorate of the Rev. John Booth, about half the membership left the old church under his leadership and organized the Green Point Tabernacle. The building now occupied by this church was completed in 1870. The property was then valued at about \$80,000 and the membership was 300. This was also about the membership of the parent church, so that in 1870 the Methodists had about 600 members. In 1893, when Protestantism was at its high water mark, these two churches had a combined membership of about 1,100.

In 1848 the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Green Point was established by a committee from the North Classis of Long Island. On the first Sunday in May of that year the following consistory was ordained: David Swalm and William P. Guest as elders; Isaac K. Snell, M. D., deacon; Dr. James P. Gardner, Ann Gardner his wife, Mrs. Margaret Marshall, Miss Mary P. Marshall as members. Originally this society had its meetings in the loft over David Swalm's store on Franklin street, and

their preachers were students from the seminary at New Brunswick, New Jersey. The Rev. John W. Ward became the first regular pastor in 1849, and the next year a frame building was erected on Java street near Franklin. Later the fine, large brick church on Kent street was built and dedicated January 30, 1870. Dr. George Talmadge was pastor for many years, but the longest pastorate was that of the Rev. Lewis Francis.

The First Presbyterian Church of Green Point at Noble and Lorimer streets was organized with fourteen members at a meeting held April 22, 1869, at Masonic Hall, under the auspices of the Presbytery of Nassau. Four lots were purchased for \$10,000, on which was erected a one-story frame structure with a seating capacity of 450, at a cost of \$4,000. This original house of worship was dedicated July 18, 1869, with the following officers: deacon, George Brinkerhoff; elders, John N. Stearns, David Joline; trustees, D. H. Furbish, Henry Dixon, David Joline, George Campbell and John N. Stearns. The present brick structure was erected in 1873 and Dr. William Howell Taylor served the society for several years as its first pastor.

The Protestant Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Baptist, the Primitive Methodist, the Christian Church, the Church of Christ, the Universalist, and the Reformed Episcopal Church soon after were established and ministered to the social and religious needs of the Protestant portion of the community.

For the Catholic inhabitants the parish of St. Antony of Padua was established about the year 1856, the first church, a brick structure, being located on India street east of Manhattan avenue. The Rev. John Brady, respected by everyone and dearly beloved by all his parishioners for his generous heart and sweetness of disposition, became its first pastor. The present church on Manhattan avenue at the head of Milton street, the largest and most pretentious church

edifice in this section of our city, was dedicated June 10, 1874.

The center of business activity having shifted from Franklin street to Manhattan avenue in 1882, the Bank moved to new quarters at 339 Manhattan avenue between Milton street and Green Point avenue, where it remained until December, 1885. At this time it was compelled to move again on account of a fire which destroyed the bank and two adjoining buildings. A temporary banking room was hurriedly fitted up at 127 Green Point avenue and business was continued there until 1887.

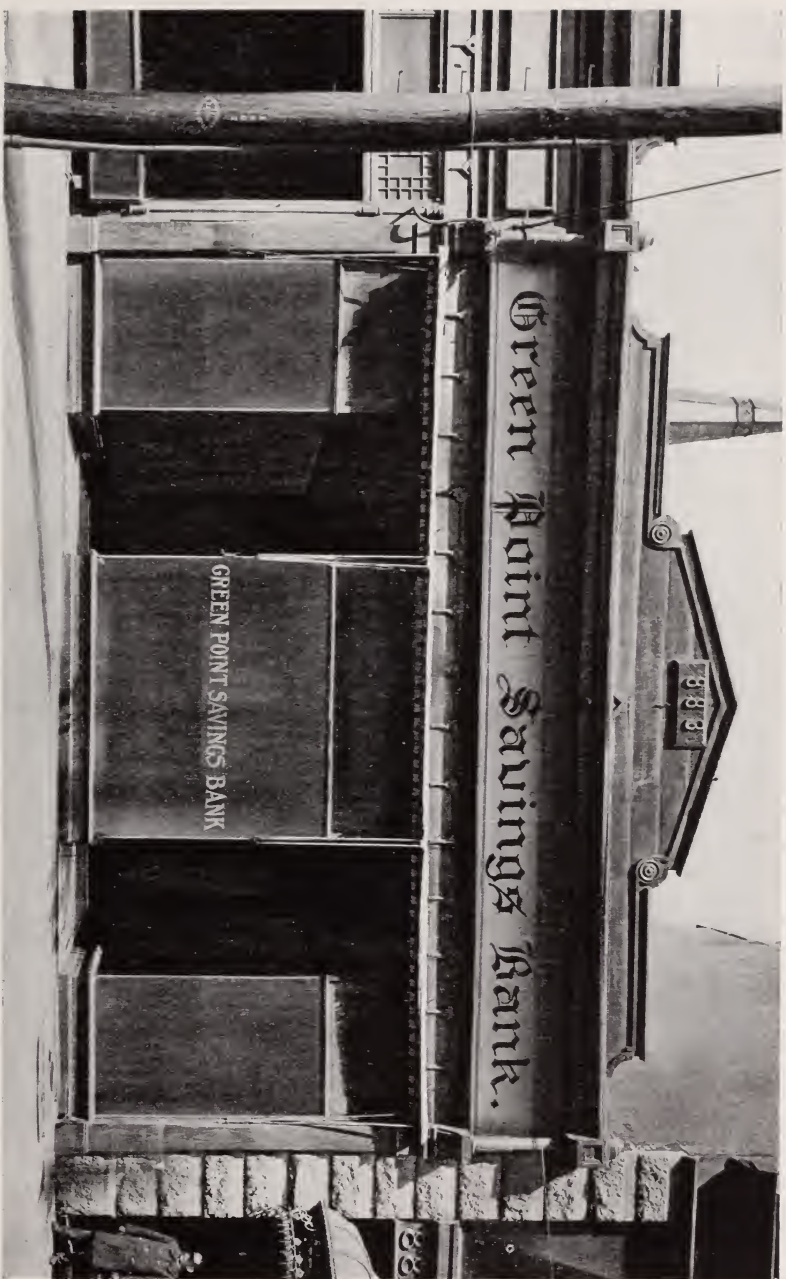
In the meantime, the property on the northwest corner of Manhattan avenue and Noble street, then occupied by John Winter, druggist, had been purchased. In August, 1887, after extensive alterations had been made to this property, including installation of vault, modern banking equipment and trustees' room, the bank moved into a new home which it was to occupy for twenty-one years. During this period the bank's deposits were increased four million dollars.

It is impossible to write any account of the development of Green Point without paying considerable attention to industries. In its history it has followed the same line of growth and change as all other communities similarly located and affected by the changing currents of occupations and inhabitants. The growth of the means of conveyance, and ready access to the great city across the river, guaranteed the future, but the coming on a large scale of commerce and industry determined definitely the character of the place. By 1860 the Five Black Arts, so called, Printing, Pottery, Gas, Glass, and Iron, were firmly established. The earlier industries remained only as long as they were imperatively needed for the life of the people and then they were supplanted by other forms of activity. The farmer gave place to the shipwright and

he in turn to the factory worker. Shipbuilding went to the Pacific coast or to the coast of Maine, where raw materials from the forests could be had in abundance at the water's edge and labor was cheaper and not so well organized. New avenues to wealth were opened as a result of the industrial invasion. Real estate values rose rapidly. The employer of a hundred hands with a small margin of profit from the daily labor of each worker could progress financially much more rapidly than the farmer who had only a few men under him.

In December of the year 1868, a newspaper in a neighboring community, wrote as follows of the Green Point of that day: "Within the last two or three years manufacturing interests of considerable magnitude have sprung up in this suburban locality, and several large and substantial buildings for manufacturing are now in the course of completion. Some of these employ several hundred hands, thus enabling many to avail themselves of their labor, their sole capital, in providing the comforts of a home and means of contentment."

"The large accession of productive industry, and the superior facilities for carrying on business in this favored locality, have naturally rapidly increased the population of the Ward, and a still further demand for houses and homes is the result. But the enterprise of our citizens is equal to the emergency, and from seventy-five to one hundred houses are now being constructed and will be ready for occupancy when the early spring returns. It is not to be wondered at that so many seek this section. Its natural advantages and attractions account for it, its churches and public schools, commodious and convenient, with cheaper rents, better air, and plenty of Ridgewood water. It has two railroads and two ferries to facilitate travel; a discount and a savings bank (the Green Point Savings Bank had been chartered at the last ses-



THE BANK AT 339 MANHATTAN AVENUE

sion of the legislature), for the accommodation and security of all their money transactions."

Among the pioneer manufacturers was Martin Kalbfleisch. This captain of industry, to whom frequent references have been made in previous pages, was born in Holland, and came to America in 1826, when he was twenty-two years of age. After trying several localities in and about New York he finally settled in our section in 1842, and built a plant for the manufacture of acids and other chemicals. About 1850 he removed his business to Bushwick and erected a large plant on the Jamaica turnpike near Master's toll-gate, and his Green Point factory was taken over and used by William Boch and Sons.

One of the earliest arts, reaching back into the twilight of history and almost contemporaneous with man himself, is that of the potter. Green Point, like Grecian Athens, was at one time celebrated for her potters, but this particular glory has passed to other ceramic centers. It is still an open question whether the first purely American porcelain was made by Charles Cartlidge at Green Point, but it is certain that as early as 1848 he had established a pottery on what was long known as Pottery hill just to the east of Pottery beach. He turned out china door furnishings and china buttons, and then a little later fine tableware, at first done in bone china and then in hard porcelain. Many famous craftsmen of superior ability were in his employ in the decorative department. Frank Lockett and Elijah Tattler were employed as painters. Mr. Tattler afterwards founded the Tattler Decoration Company of Trenton, New Jersey, one of the great pottery centers of this country. Mr. Josiah Jones, his modeler, was a man of pronounced genius, whose beautiful creations were produced in both Parian and Jasper ware. While at Green Point he executed a number of busts and bas-reliefs of such famous Americans as Chief Justice Marshall, Daniel



TEMPORARY QUARTERS AT 127 GREEN POINT AVENUE

Webster, Zachary Taylor and Henry Clay in fine brooch medallions.

In 1855 this firm dissolved and reorganized as the American Porcelain Manufacturing Company, but no success was attained and the works were closed the following year. Thus expired the most promising pottery venture in America up to that time. Failure was due to operating along the lines of mediaeval times and the output did not meet a popular demand. The day of the artist-artisan had passed and workmen producing on a large scale at low cost had arrived.

About 1850 William Boch and his four sons, Anthony, William, Nicholas, and Victor, all famous craftsmen, came to Green Point and started several potteries. Knowing more of the artistic than of the business side of the venture they did not succeed in holding their properties. Two of them, the Union Porcelain Works and the Empire China Works, are still in existence. Thomas C. Smith, a New York architect, joined them in 1867, when they were operating in the old Martin Kalbfleisch factory on Oakland street, and he eventually succeeded them and organized the Union Porcelain Works, a successful enterprise as long as he lived. Bone china was made until 1863, when it was replaced by a purely kaolinic body in 1865. Mr. Karl Muller, a famous modeler, accomplished some ambitious work at this pottery, among his masterpieces being the Century and Keramos vases. In those days Mr. Smith, in the face of tremendous difficulties, produced a very good china body, and the firm was for a considerable period of time the only one to make a pure porcelain. Here at one time was one of the most thriving industries, a pottery teeming with workers about the rotating wheels, turning out wares by the thousands of pieces and supplying an ever increasing demand.

Glass has played an important part in the history of civilization, aiding man in the production of objects useful



BANK AT MANHATTAN AVENUE AND NOBLE STREET

and artistic. Green Point has done its full share of work in producing glass. In the late fifties, Mr. Christian Dorflinger, whose name has always been associated in America with artistic cut-glass, and who had established in 1854 a large cut-glass works on Plymouth street, Brooklyn, came to Green Point and purchased the property now owned by the Gleason-Tiebout Company on Commercial street from Union College, and built a factory for the manufacture of lamp chimneys. The discovery and use of the petroleum product, kerosene, had created a demand for this kind of glassware. Mr. William F. Dorflinger relates that when his father erected this factory there were no houses in the vicinity, so his father was compelled to erect the building now used by the Gleason-Tiebout Company as offices, as tenements for his working people. The old chimney of the factory is still standing in the rear of these buildings, a grim reminder of earlier days before the creek was filled in, for the building stood on the water's edge. Mr. Dorflinger the younger recalls the time when as a boy he would dive out the back door and go swimming in what was then crystal clear water.

In 1865 Mr. Christian Dorflinger, having an ample fortune, retired from business to his farm in Pennsylvania. The Green Point factory was sold to Bailey and Dobelmann, former employees. The new firm made money at the start, but subsequently failed. The property was then leased to J. W. Siebel and then to the E. P. Gleason Company, and finally the present owners, the Gleason-Tiebout Company, purchased the plant. Mr. Marshall W. Gleason and Mr. R. T. Cordeau of this firm, developed in America the art of etching glassware for lighting fixtures, and they hold the only patents. With every advance in electric lighting they have kept steady pace; for every new variety of lamp they have produced the proper illuminating glassware.

The earliest settlers of Green Point were their own lumbermen. Dirck Volckertsen and Pieter Praa, aided by slave labor, felled the trees, hewed the timbers and planks, and fashioned them into boards, beams, and studs with which they built their Dutch homesteads. The land was well covered with trees, with an abundance of conifers, scarlet oak, chestnut, and yellow birch. The Dutch settlers were more proficient in the sawing and preparing of timber than were the English.

With the appearance of the ship yards, and the demand for workmen's houses, came lumber yards and dealers in building material. Some of these yards still survive, but most of them have disappeared. The first timber dealers were probably William Smith and Son, who in 1850 and for years after had their yard at the foot of Kent street, then J. W. and T. D. Jones at West and Kent streets, John C. Orr and Company, at one time Orr and Rowland, at the foot of India street, and George H. Stone at Noble and Franklin streets. Roswell Eldridge at his yard also manufactured tree nails from locust, used in the early days in all the ship yards. Mr. E. C. Smith came about 1870 and established his yard and box factory. Later James D. Leary's yard was opened at Eagle and Provost streets.

In 1888 the Leary firm financed the building of the famous Joggins raft, which arrived safely in New York after a trip of over seven hundred miles from Nova Scotia on August 11. Eleven days were spent on this anxious voyage. For more than fifty years before this date lumber transportation by raft had been tried both on the Pacific coast and in the East, but every attempt had ended in failure. Mr. Leary himself had experienced two failures, before the great cigar raft was successfully launched and towed the long distance into New York harbor. The dimensions were 595 feet in length, with a girth for over 100 feet of 150 feet and a depth of 38 feet. The great

mass of logs was bound together by iron chains and steel wire and was almost as compact and solid as though it were the trunk of some giant tree.

It is only some sixty years ago when the world was in the candle period of illumination so far as the vast masses of the people were concerned. No better measurement of the swift advances of the last century can be found than the rapid changes in artificial illumination. So rapid was the advance that certain remote parts of the world leaped at contact with civilization from the primitive torch to the electric lamp. For others living in civilized communities the transition was more gradual from the tallow candle, the spluttering sperm oil lamp, the kerosene lamp, and the gas light to the brilliant electric light. In 1859 Edwin L. Drake, financially backed by promoters, successfully sank the first oil well at Titusville, Pa., and solved the petroleum problem. The enormous supplies of crude petroleum never had any great industrial value however, until a method of purification was found and developed and large refineries were established. As the city of New York was the first great market for both crude and refined oil, and as it has always been one of the strategic locations commercially considered, it rapidly became the locality of a number of large and important refineries.

The refinery of Charles Pratt and Company on the river front at Bushwick creek, while within the geographical limits of Williamsburgh, nevertheless really belongs to this section. This famous refinery was established about 1867 and was remarkably successful. Astral oil, one of its chief products, became known as the safest and best of the kerosenes, and the demand oftentimes outran the supply. Mr. Pratt employed Green Point mechanics, and this great plant has always been an important economic factor since its inception in the welfare of this section. The founder of this refinery and his family after him have,

with modest and unassuming liberality, been consistent contributors to the social work of this community. Thirty years ago Mr. Pratt built the Astral Apartments with the purpose of affording his working people better living conditions. It remains a monument to his kind-heartedness and interest in the welfare of his employees.

Our country has been abundantly blessed in vast natural resources, the raw material from which has been builded a strong and wealthy civilization. Among these resources none has been more useful, nor more potent as a factor than has iron. Its discovery and use have made the nation industrially independent and greatly increased the national wealth. Great mines have been opened and great manufacturing centers established. Our annual output of pig iron from our modern blast furnaces exceeds in value any other manufactured product. The sensational and dramatic development of the steel and iron industry in America bounded by the space of fifty years was so broad in its sweep, that in the early days of industrial Green Point this community participated in a large way in the progress and resultant wealth accruing therefrom.

Among the foundries which from time to time have flourished here were Braid Brothers, H. C. Harney and Company, Burr and Houston, and later Taylor and Company. All these were jobbing foundries, specializing in machinery castings, and at least two of them manufactured piano plates. The architectural branch of the iron industry was represented by such firms as Cheney and Hewlett, Smith and O. Rourke, and Henry C. Fisher. Mr. Farrel Logan manufactured steam boilers and also constructed the great gas tanks which here and there may be seen throughout the city. Ball and Jewell's machine shop has been continuously in business on Franklin street for over half a century.

Another ancient craft, rope making, has long been estab-

lished here. The two cordage plants, the American Manufacturing Company, and the Chelsea Fibre Mills, are among the largest in the world, and at present are employing more labor than any other single industry in Green Point.

Among other manufacturing concerns of long ago that of Burr and Company may be mentioned. In 1858 their factory was established at the junction of West and Eagle streets, for the making of tackle blocks to supply local ship fitters, the general trade, and the United States Government.

It is said of that great manufacturing center of England, Birmingham, that it turns out anything from a pen point to an anchor. In variety of product, in the quantities it turns out, Green Point can truly be said to be an American Birmingham. The raw materials are drawn from all parts of the world and their manufacture provides employment for our people and supplies for our ever hungry machines. Our products go to all quarters of the habitable globe. A traveler a few years since, visiting a synagogue in Jerusalem, observed that the lamp ever kept burning in that sacred place was filled from a five gallon case marked "Pratt's Astral Oil." In the earlier days our sturdy Green Pointers built ships, our spar-makers hewed and smoothed the masts and spars, our chandlers fitted the canvas and supplied the craft for the ocean voyage, and these ships returning, brought to us from distant lands and the islands of the sea a great variety of wealth. To-day over fifteen thousand hands are employed in our factories and in supplying human wants produce untold wealth. These factories are scattered about the outskirts of the dwelling center, mostly along the water front, some very large, with thousands of hands on their pay rolls, many of smaller size, but producing a vast variety of the goods of commerce from dolls to gas tanks.

The advent of these manufacturing establishments brought in its train a change in the character of the nationalities of our people. Until about 1880 the settlers were of Anglo-Saxon, Dutch and French extraction; but these were then rapidly supplanted by different sorts of laborers from the southern and eastern countries of Europe, who brought with them strength and hope, but at the same time made a new and serious social problem. Churches for the Russian, the Slovak, the Hungarian, and the Pole were soon dedicated. The vast problem of the Americanization of these peoples remained untouched. The native Green Pointers have done little or nothing to remedy this unfortunate condition, one that is duplicated many times over in manufacturing centers the country over. Our manufacturers must learn the lesson that something besides profits must be considered, that the turning of these foreigners into liberty-loving, intelligent citizens is in part their duty, that compulsory education for adults is as necessary for the safety of the republic as for their children, and that clever social propagandists always find it easy to sow destructive seeds among an ignorant and unassimilated people. The corner stone of a democracy is education, not for a few but for all, not for children only but for parents as well. Instruction in our social, industrial, and political ideals in order that knowledge of these may be created, is imperative. The war is doing much to unify us as a people, but the partial result gained in this manner must be supplemented by courses of instruction for foreign born adults. National recognition and national aid should help in the proper solution of this serious and pressing problem. Understanding is needed by both these newcomers of our national ideals and by the native-born Americans of the lately arrived. The Americanization League of the Green Point Neighborhood Association and the Green Point

Y. M. C. A. have put forth some needed efforts with English classes and talks to men on health and civics. These efforts have been comparatively feeble however, because of lack of popular support.

The northern end of Green Point is largely a foreign city, over 80% of the inhabitants being of foreign parentage and 40% of foreign birth. Over one half of this population is Polish and Russian. In this section the greatest illiteracy prevails, 11½%. At the present time the percentage of illiteracy is higher than that of any other section of the city. While the moral conditions and observance of the law are as good as in other portions of the borough, the infant mortality rate has been slightly higher than in other sections. Here is another loud call for civic betterment to those who have been negligent in the past of their opportunities and obligations.

The past is glorious with a most creditable record of growth and achievement. The present has its manifold duties in converting the former citizens of monarchies into devoted loyal citizens of the greatest democracy the world has ever seen. The future is irradiated by the rainbow promise of future progress, of larger liberty, of richer well-being. As Green Point has played no mean part in our national drama, so in the future it is to be expected that in all things American she will stand in the front rank.

Returning to the latest period in the history of the Bank, we find that the steady growth had been such that it was felt provision must be made to handle adequately the present business and particularly to prepare for the future development of the institution. It was decided to erect a building of a size and type which would reflect the strength and dignity of the Bank, and which would be devoted solely to the Bank's business.

With this object in mind the trustees purchased property

located at the southwest corner of Manhattan avenue and Calyer street in 1905. Building operations were delayed until one and one-half years had elapsed because of some unmatured leases on the property. Work was begun finally in May, 1907, by the John Pierce Company, builders, after plans drawn by Helme and Huberty, architects. The new building was opened for business on November 12, 1908. It represents an outlay of \$170,000, and in its simplicity and permanency of construction exemplifies the reputation of the Bank in the community for conservatism, for strength, and for service. To-day, ten years after coming to its new building, the deposits have grown to approximately \$11,000,000.

If that early and great citizen, Pieter Praa, who knew Green Point as a quiet settlement with only a farmhouse here and there nestling low on a green knoll, with surrounding gardens, gay in spring with multi-colored tulips, and bright in summer with fiery canna or aureate golden glow, or wrapped in winter in a pure white blanket of glistening snow, could come to life again, he would see a modern industrial beehive. Smoky skies, blazing blasts from fiery furnaces, the never ceasing machinery in a hundred factories, where thousands of laborers spend their busy days, the loaded trucks and heavily laden ships would all meet his gaze. To him and to all his companions of that day these changes would be strange and frightful. He would no longer be able to raise his own food or make his own clothes. No longer would he travel on horseback or by stage on land or in skiffs on the water. His day of isolation with its pastoral and simple life has passed and in its place have come the improved methods of travel, of heating, of illumination, of food and clothing supply. To-day is the era of factories, furnaces, shops, and foundries, all evidences of the great commercial and industrial era in which we now live.

